

Notes from Annual Progress Meeting with EPA/Ecy Water Programs

@ Ecology HQ on November 27, 2018

Agenda – [EMBED Word.Document.12 \s]

Attendees: EPA - Opalski, Croxton, Steiner-Riley, Burgess, Lidgard, Shaw, Murchie, Chung, Jennings, Edmondson, Wilcox, Burke. Ecology - Bartlett, Gildersleeve, Nejedly, Levitt, Keltz, McGowan, Ott.

Bartlett intro – Touched on changes and priorities to Ecy work due to: federal administration and PNW spotlight, upcoming CWA assurances under Forest and Fish, Spokane, NPS – sensitive authorizing environment, 401 permits, a lot of standards work, NEP – Orca recommendations, unpermitted SW has gotten lost and no funding, received petition for nutrients rulemaking, staff salary increases (COLAs) and flat federal grants means less staff able to do same amount of or more work.

Opalski intro – Touched on budget, staffing, realignment, general EPA news.

Litigation – Cara gave an overview of cases in R10: 16 active water cases where EPA is defendant, 5 cases in WA – Deschutes TMDL, Columbia Riverkeeper, Wildfish and Netpens, CZARA/319, WA State Multi-claim (Transparency Directive).

TMDLs Deschutes - Croxton – need more support from Ecy on Deschutes. Rich agreed to help. Rich said important to coordinate on messaging because of Budd Inlet EIS underway. Ecy needs options for Capitol Lake. Proposed new hatchery 3.5M Chinook, seeking state capital funding to start construction next year. Linkage to PS nutrient reduction strategy and dissolved oxygen study. Order of operations: 1) hatchery permit, 2) Deschutes TMDL, 3) Budd Inlet EIS (goes until 2021). Ecy wants Deschutes TMDL information to inform Budd Inlet work. Columbia River - Croxton gave a brief update, due date is 12/17/18. TMDL production – settlement agreement with NWEA, due 2023, Ecy still committed to measures.

Columbia River Basin Restoration Act – Opalski gave overview and status.

NEP – Peter linking NEP budget to Orca Task Force recommendations. Heather – Columbia TDG short-term mod is for Chinook survival. Part of multclaim settlement so EPA won't be commenting. Ecology did reach out to NWEA as an FYI. Letter from the Swinomish requested same amount of effort/time spent on temperature as fecal coliform.

PS Nutrient Reduction – Melissa – Ecy put in a budget ask for NPS staff (relates to Heather's opening remarks). Lots of stuff going on. High priority. Ben Cope has been a terrific resource/asset.

Groundwater – Marie will set up a follow-up meeting to finish going over groundwater PPA tasks and funding changes. DOH wants more coordination w Ecy on source water protection.

WQS – Hanh – will send out tribal consult letters and stay on top of that, partnering on ESA consults and variances. Melissa – working on a schedule, WQ assessment policy was a huge piece of work, lots of tribal engagement. EPA will engage more when assessment comes in. HAB is a growing issue, national workshop in Seattle, March 2019. Ocean acidification.

NPDES – Karen gave an update on the MOA, review on 4-yr cycle same as Permit Quality Review (PQR) cycle. Mike – gave an overview of pending permits, backlog is now 29, next EPA due date is 2022, will develop a schedule in early 2019 to share with Ecy. EPA to keep Ellie Ott in the loop for tracking purposes. Karen mentioned the NWEA petition and that Karen and Angela will think about next steps. Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. NPDES permits for Columbia dams – Jenny Wu and Ellie Ott are talking. Certification letter – Ecy needs a response mid-December. Melissa Gildersleeve will get clarity from Gov's office on timing.

Next PPA cycle – document to be updated in spring 2019. May have meetings (via VTC) to discuss changes, at a minimum will use email to make changes. Ecy rotates who is in lead. This time overall Ecy contact will be Michelle Underwood (RCRA). Lucy and Jack Boller are EPA leads. Alison is lead on PPG. Michelle is lead on water portion of PPA. More to come in next couple of months.

Follow-ups

Peter - Set up a follow-up meeting with EPA/Ecy 319 and NEP to discuss inconsistency issue that Melissa raised. (Melissa, Heather, Dan, Lucy, Peter). Also have a follow-up meeting on Puget Sound in general – Orca recommendations.

Marie – Set up a follow-up meeting to discuss groundwater PPA tasks and funding changes.

Next annual progress meeting – provide feedback to Michelle on any suggestions you may have on frequency and format (e.g., all hands overview and then breakouts?). Some EPA managers told me after the meeting that they prefer Idaho's format. Note any changes will need to be supported by Ecology.